

## American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

1300 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005

April 3, 1998

**Moe Biller, President**  
(202) 842-4246

Honorable John M. McHugh, Chairman  
Subcommittee on the Postal Service  
Committee on Government Reform and Oversight  
Congress of the United States  
B-349C Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-6143

Dear Chairman McHugh:

This is in response to your letter of February 27, 1998, soliciting written comments on HR 22, as revised. As per your letter, we understand and expect that this official APWU response will be posted on the Subcommittee's web page for public examination.

I have seriously studied your bill in its original and revised versions and sought the viewpoints of our economist and others about it. Based on these endeavors, I have concluded that APWU cannot support your bill.

A major reason for this conclusion is that passing a law to insure that postal rates go up no faster than the CPI (and probably less than the CPI given your bill's productivity factor) will have the result of taking the record profits of the USPS and handing them over to large mailers before our Union members and other rank and file workers have at least a chance to bargain for some fair share of them. Because of this, your bill sharply tilts the collective bargaining table towards management, making it all the easier for the USPS to achieve the current PMG's stated objective of keeping wage increases for postal workers at least one percentage point below those of private sector employees.

A private sector firm would interpret record profitability like that of the USPS as evidence that it was functioning well. Your remarks suggest you agree that the USPS is doing exceptionally well, but you indicate your bill addresses the future. Yet, I have seen no projections of what the future can be expected to be and how your bill will change it. Indeed, no cost-benefit analysis has been done, despite the fact that Congress has made a point of insisting that legislation be premised on such analysis. The Congress has made a point of legislating that cost-benefit analysis accompany all legislative proposals and I don't understand why it wasn't done in this case.

### National Executive Board

Moe Biller  
President

William Burrus  
Executive Vice President

Douglas C. Holbrook  
Secretary-Treasurer

Greg Bell  
Industrial Relations Director

Robert L. Tunstall  
Director, Clerk Division

James W. Lingberg  
Director, Maintenance Division

Robert C. Pritchard  
Director, MVS Division

George N. McKeithen  
Director, SDM Division

### Regional Coordinators

Leo F. Persails  
Central Region

Jim Burke  
Eastern Region

Elizabeth "Liz" Powell  
Northeast Region

Terry Stapleton  
Southern Region

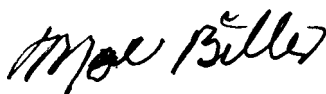
Raydell R. Moore  
Western Region

April 3, 1998  
Page 2

I would like to see a quantitative analysis covering the next five to ten years with and without your bill. The analysis should contain projections of mail volume and revenues and show such information not only for the current mail classes but also for the noncompetitive portion of the mail stream, I would like to see scenarios with different assumptions that suggest how much of the competitive mail stream you think is likely to be captured by private carriers versus the postal service. For example, my fear, and I think the USPS as well, is that, given the provisions of your bill, the USPS could lose priority mail, its fastest growing product. (Not that it matters to us; the PMG has already contracted our work on priority mail.) At best, the USPS might end up like it is in the parcel post case as the mail service provider of last resort, since it would be bound to provide universal service while its competitors cream-skim.

Based on the above concerns, I simply cannot support your bill nor can I recommend it to our rank and file.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Moe Biller". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Moe Biller  
President

P.S. While reviewing my final draft of this letter, I received your March 31, 1998, letter concerning APWU's recent newspaper advertisements addressing the recent Pew Research Center for the People and the Press survey showing that Americans rate the United States Postal Service more favorably than any other government agency. I note that your letter fails to address either the Pew Poll or the substance of the APWU advertisements. Perhaps the above comments, plus the inclusion of the attached reprint from the Washington Post, will perfect the Subcommittee's record as it relates to issues of major concern to America's postal workers.

MB: hfa  
opeiu #2/afl-cio

Attachment

# The Washington Post

TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 1998

## THE FEDERAL PAGE

### Vote of Support for Employees

*Civil Servants Favored Over Politicians, 67 Percent to 16 Percent*

By STEPHEN BARR  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Despite substantial distrust of the federal government, Americans show more confidence in federal employees than in their elected officials to do the right thing, according to a new survey of public attitudes toward Washington.

The survey, conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, found more trust in civil servants than politicians, by 67 percent to 16 percent. Sixty-nine percent also reported holding a favorable opinion of government workers.

In general, the survey showed Americans to be less critical of government in a variety of ways than they were just a few years ago. As questions became more specific, evaluations of the government improved, the survey indicated.

The polling found improved public assessments of specific departments and agencies in the government, with seven receiving better ratings than they did in the mid-1980s. Only the Internal Revenue Service, the subject of widely publicized critical hearings last fall, drew a more negative than positive rating—60 percent unfavorable and 38 percent favorable.

The highest favorability ratings went to the U.S. Postal Service, the National Park Service, the Centers for Disease Control, the Defense Department, the Food and Drug Administration, NASA and the Federal Aviation Administration.

At a conference yesterday sponsored by the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania and the Pew Charitable Trusts, public policy experts and political scientists grappled with the findings and the links between trust in government, voter turnout, generational and gender gaps and the role of the news media.

Overall, the survey found that

### Change in Favorability of Federal Agencies

	Favorable	
	1987 %	1997/1998 %
Postal Service	76	89
National Park Service	80	83
CDC	—	79
Defense	57	76
FDA	74	75
NASA	66	73
FAA	53	70
EPA	62	69
Agriculture	60	68
FBI	78	67
SSA	—	62
Education	60	61
VA	68*	59
Commerce	57	58
Justice	53	56
FTC	56	53
HUD	49	51
CIA	52	51
IRS	49	38

1987 data from Roper. \* Trend is from 1986

SOURCE: Pew Research Center for The People & The Press

THE WASHINGTON POST

only one-third of Americans think they can trust the government most or all of the time. Just a quarter said the government does an excellent or good job running its programs.

But all things being equal, the job performance of federal agencies played an inconsistent role in determining attitudes toward them, the survey found. As with trust in government generally, Americans holding positive views toward political leaders tended, on average, to express favorable views of specific departments, while those holding negative views of political leaders expressed unfavorable opinions of government agencies.

Still, the survey found, public evaluations of government performance played an influential role in shaping views of the IRS, the

Social Security Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Education Department. Performance was not a driving factor in evaluations of the Food and Drug Administration or the Pentagon.

Taxes, in particular, influenced the views Americans hold of the IRS and the Social Security Administration. Americans who think they are paying too much in taxes are more likely than others to hold an unfavorable opinion of the two agencies.

Women rated federal departments more favorably than men, while Hispanics rated the departments higher than either whites or blacks. Democrats rated agencies in general more favorably than Republicans and independents, the survey found.

The survey showed government workers, in particular, are well-regarded by most of the public.

Seventy-one percent of Americans think the government is a good place to work, primarily because of the benefits, pay and job security. Still, they rate the private sector over the government as an employer, by 70 percent to 23 percent.

Forty percent, though, said they would recommend that young people start their careers in politics or government.

Eighteen percent of the respondents reported that they work for the government, at the federal, state or local level, and they were slightly more trusting of the government.

Forty-six percent of government workers said they basically trust the federal government, compared with 39 percent of the general public; 44 percent said they trust government always or most of the time, compared with 39 percent of the public.

But government workers were just as distrustful of elected officials as most Americans: 55 percent said most politicians are not trustworthy.

# We've worked hard to earn your trust.

**Don't let Congress destroy what we've built together.**

**W**hen the latest survey came out last week showing that Americans rate the United States Postal Service more favorably than any other government agency, some people were surprised. Not us.

America's Postal Workers work hard to make sure *your* mail gets moved as quickly and efficiently as possible — often under very difficult circumstances. And we do it at a cost that's still the best in the world. In fact, postage rates are a better bargain today than ever.

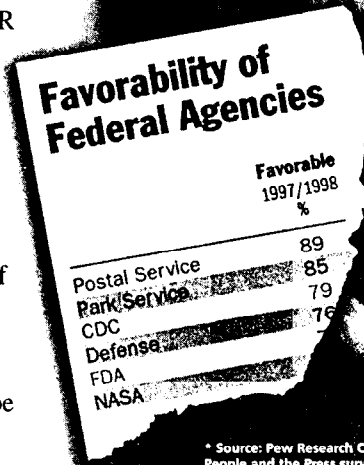
But some in Congress want to change that. Legislation pending in Congress — HR 22 — takes a big step toward tearing down a postal system owned by you, and responsive to you.

HR 22 will mean special deals for the big package delivery corporations — but higher costs to you. It will mean sporadic service in large areas of the country, and less oversight by the American government to ensure the security of your mail. Because under HR 22, much of America's mail will be turned over to big corporations who answer to Wall Street, not you.

Who wins from HR 22? The big package delivery corporations and Wall Street. Their profits go up.

Who loses? **You do.** Consumers and small-business owners who rely on over 400,000 American Postal Workers to move more than 600 million pieces of mail a day. Economically, efficiently and securely.

HR 22 means special deals for the few... and higher costs for you. Let's stop it. Now.



\* Source: Pew Research Center for the People and the Press survey, 1997/1998

## Our Postal Service isn't broken.

**The last thing we need is for Congress to "fix" it.**